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ABSTRACT

This journal is an international review for researchers and teachers of modern Celtic languages. This volume contains seven articles. There are three research articles: "Issues in the Design of Irish Credited Courses" (Thomas W. Ihde); "Learning Irish for Participation in the Irish Language Speech Community outside the Gaeltacht" (Muiris O Laoire); and "Gaelic Language Maintenance Typologies and Constructs" (Kara A. Smith). There are two articles under the heading of Teaching Forum: "What Do You Do When the Teacher Needs a Teacher?" (Donall MacNamara); and "Taking the 'Aching' out of 'Teaching': Fun and Games in the Classroom" (Maray A. Watson). There are two review articles: "Johnstone, R.M., Thorpe, G., MacNeil M. and Stranding, R. (1999). The Progress and Attainments of Pupils Receiving Gaelic Medium Education" (Kara A. Smith); and "Jones, Mari C. Language Obsolescence and Revitalization: Linguistic Change in Two Sociolinguistically Contrasting Welsh Communities" (Kevin J. Rottet). Some aqrticles contain references. (KFT)

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Editors

Muiris Ó Laoire
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Nancy Stenson, Co-Editor, *JCLL*, stensonn@naaclt.org
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JOURNAL OF CELTIC LANGUAGE LEARNING

Editors

Muiris Ó Laoire
Department of Languages and Communication,
The Institute of Technology,
Tralee, Co. Kerry
Éire.

E-mail olaoirem@naaclt.org

Nancy Stenson
Institute of Linguistics and Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures,
University of Minnesota,
190 Klaeber Court, 320-16th Avenue, SE,
Minneapolis, MN 55455.

E-mail stensonn@naaclt.org

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- The *Journal of Celtic Language Learning* is published each winter.
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- Those interested should submit four typed copies of their manuscript (two without any indication of the authors' name) to Nancy Stenson, Institute of Linguistics and Asian and Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Minnesota, 190 Klaeber Court, 320-16th Avenue, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Keep a disk (computer) copy of the paper. It will be requested in the case of acceptance.
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- All submissions will be refereed blindly by two anonymous readers.
- Comments from the referees will be forwarded to the authors together with the editors' decision regarding publishing after 15 September of the same year.

INDEXES

Some of the articles published in the *Journal of Celtic Language Learning* are abstracted or indexed in *Language Teaching*, LLBA (*Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts),* RIE *(Resources in Education)*, the Modern Language Association *International Bibliography,* and Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann's *Selected Articles from Language Journals.*

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ISSUES IN THE DESIGN OF CREDITED IRISH COURSES

THOMAS W. IHDE
WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

This position paper shares experiences and opinions regarding the creation of college level Irish language courses in North America. It begins by explaining why Irish should be offered in third level institutions and proceeds to consider practical issues including peer support and opposition, hiring of instructors, piloting courses, planning publicity, negotiating credit type, and dealing with transfer issues. Syllabus development is also briefly considered.

WHY IRISH?

There are many reasons why a college or university might chose to offer Irish language courses to its students.[1] Some institutions take into account their large number of students of Irish descent and decide to offer the tongue as a heritage language. Some colleges may offer Irish as a result of a notable number of Irish immigrants in the student population. Still other institutions may offer Irish as a part of an Irish or Celtic Studies program or to complement an English department program that focuses on Irish literature. Whatever the reason, the introduction of this less commonly taught language into the permanent foreign language offerings of an institution of higher education in the United States can be a difficult and long process. This position paper will share general comments and specific experiences related to creating credited Irish language courses. The opinions presented here come from interactions with several institutions and especially the author's multiple experiences of designing courses for Bergen Community College (BCC). It is the hope of the author that these comments and

examples might help others striving to initiate Irish language offerings in their institution. Of course, the reader needs to remember that regulations at different colleges will vary greatly; however, most likely some of the considerations listed below will apply to all third level institutions.

The goal of the process described in this article is to have Irish adopted as a foreign language in a given third level institution. At some colleges, a course can be given one or more semesters on a trial basis. Also some universities offer less commonly taught languages in seminar linguistics courses, for example. Neither of these options will be focussed on here; rather this article will attempt to define the process by which Irish can be adopted as a general education undergraduate course on equal footing with French, German and Spanish.

Before investing a lot of time in a project such as this, it is recommended that one does some regional research first. Program designers should look at other institutions in their area offering Irish.[2] Having no other institution in one's area offering Irish is not automatically an advantage. Administrators may not be very courageous and question why no other institution has gone this route. For example, comments such as one in a *New York Times* article (Steward 1997) pointing out that Bergen Community College was the only institution of higher education in the State of New Jersey to offer Irish for credit, did cause concern on the part of those with limited knowledge of the situation. In reality, BCC was one of many institutions in the New York City metropolitan area to offer Irish for credit, although technically speaking, it was indeed the only institution on the Jersey side of the Hudson River.

The opposite case may also be a concern. If one already has several neighboring institutions offering Irish, one may not have a large enough pool from which to draw students. However, cities such as New York and Boston have adequate numbers of Irish enthusiasts to support credited courses at a number of neighboring institutions.

Lastly, it is suggested that the individual proposing the course may want to gather information concerning the percentage of Irish-Americans in the college's student population and in the communities that surround the college campus. In the BCC example, I was well aware of the high percentage of Irish in the county. Bergen County residents who claimed Irish ancestry on the 1990 census totalled 148,018. Besides having over ten percent of all Irish-Americans living in the State of New Jersey, Bergen County also had 50% more Irish-Americans than Monmouth County, a county where its community college has a strong tradition of Irish language classes (Llorente 1995).

UNDERGRADUATE VERSUS ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS

Some will undoubtedly question why Irish should be offered at the college level. Isn't it enough to study Irish in adult education or continuing education programs? Four possible reasons could be suggested for focusing on college as opposed to adult education. First, for the Irish language in America, it is important that it be treated with the same level of importance and seriousness as other less commonly taught languages at a university. For example, Bergen Community College already offered Japanese and Korean as credited courses before the proposed addition of Irish. If Irish is going to survive in America as a seriously taught foreign language, it will need to have a presence especially at the most highly esteemed level of studies, university.

Second, colleges and universities offer prolonged exposure to a language, far beyond that which an adult-language program can possibly offer. For example, continuing education at BCC offered, starting in 1995, two courses of Irish, each lasting 15 hours (90 minutes for ten weeks). The total of 30 hours can hardly compare to the 128 hours of the fall and spring sequence of undergraduate courses at the same institution, which began in 1997[3].

Currently, the majority of Irish language learners appear to be adults (Ihde 1994: 84). In many cases, the adult

learners I have come in contact with have been individuals whose children are now at college age or older and at this point in their lives, they have some extra time to pursue their own interests. These learners have been the backbone of the Irish language learning movement in the United States. However, if it is desired that individuals of other age groups study the language, programs will need to be made available for them. For example, in some parts of Canada, secondary students can opt to study Gaelic (Smith 1994:3-4). By offering Irish as a foreign language in higher education, 18-25 year olds are often introduced to the language for the first time.

The last reason cited here for offering Irish at the college level would be technological opportunities. Colleges, unlike any other venue for teaching languages in the United States, have spent large amounts of money to equip classrooms and labs with the latest technology. Some examples of advantages that a college venue can bring include language labs, computer labs, libraries, software and book acquisitions, Internet access, satellite conferencing, multi-system television and video-players, and organized publicity[4].

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER: SUPPORT

Once the course proposer decides to dedicate time and energy to have an Irish course offered at a given institution, there is a number of issues she will need to consider at this early stage. It is important to identify allies in the college. By the time one begins working on developing Irish at a given institution, the proposer should already have a good idea of who the Irish or Celtic cultural enthusiasts at the institution are. Of course, before taking any formal steps, it is advisable to begin to discuss ideas regarding course creation with full-time instructors at the designated institution. One shouldn't limit oneself to the foreign language department. English and history departments, for example, often have scholars with interests in Irish themes

in their own fields as well. Additionally, if the college or university web page enables you to search the institution's pages for specific words, try "Irish," "Gaelic," and "Celtic." Individuals in departments not traditionally associated with the humanities may be carrying out research focused on the Irish experience or have hobbies related to Ireland. In my Bergen Community College experience, the nursing faculty staff had a few Irish language/culture enthusiasts. It is important to build as many bridges between the foreign language department and other departments as possible. College- or university-wide bodies such as the senate may eventually need to understand what the course designer is proposing so that they can vote to adopt or reject course proposals. Allies, however, are even more important because they are able to drum up general interest and encourage students to enrol in the course.

The value of having a full-time faculty member to spearhead the project is essential. A project such as this requires the full-time sponsor to act as a link between the faculty and administration on the one hand and the student body forming the grassroots support for such a course on the other. In the Bergen Community College example, I was an assistant professor in the English Department at the time. Having this status provided me with greater opportunities for contact with other full-time colleagues and also gave me greater exposure as to how programs were developed at the institution.

There are other ways to develop community support for the courses. One possibility is to schedule a lecture on the Irish language and culture in the month of March. This can also be a great opportunity to collaborate with faculty from another department. The event can be publicized in local papers and on the local Irish-American radio show, if the area has one. This approach worked well at BCC. The topic of the joint lecture (with a professor from the history department) was the Irish language and the Great Hunger. We drew a crowd of about 120 listeners who included students, faculty, staff, and off-campus interested individuals.

INSTRUCTORS

One area that must be considered at an early stage regards instructors[5]. As with any less commonly taught language, adjunct instructors have other full-time responsibilities that dictate their availability. For this reason, it's best to have several instructors identified or interviewed beforehand. If the individual proposing the courses is planning to teach the courses, it is still advisable to identify other instructors. One must be prepared for growth. At BCC, I started by teaching the first class myself. Since then we have had times when three different Irish language instructors were scheduled to teach in a given term.

PILOTING

After building up support and informing others that such a course is needed, the chair of the hosting department must be approached. If the department is open to giving the language a try, the chair will instruct the course designer in how to pilot the course. Some colleges may suggest that the course be piloted through continuing education to prove student interest. Other universities will permit the course to run in the foreign language, linguistics, or English department on a trail basis for a limited number of semesters. Data from the trial run will be helpful to both the instructor and the administration regarding course planning. Additionally questionnaires can be administered seeking information concerning students' intentions and their interest in undergraduate classes. In the case of BCC, trial adult education offerings proved immense interest. In our first semester, we closed enrollment at 34 students. This beginning course and a second level course have continued to be offered through the years.

Whether an institution requires the course proposer to pilot the course through continuing education or permits a few trial semesters of the course directly in the department it is expected to eventually be housed, there will still be

several common factors to be considered. These include publicity, syllabus design, credit status, transfer issues, and internal opposition.

PUBLICITY AND SYLLABUS DEVELOPMENT

Publicity will need to be increased and syllabi will need to be developed as on prepares to pilot the course. Concerning publicity, an instructor should never leave the responsibility in the hands of the department or institution. Seeing that these first few semesters are serving as a trial, the course proposer will need to ensure that the piloted classes are full and that enrollment is maintained at respectable levels throughout the semester.

Some institutions require that publicity be channeled through a public information office at the college. If this is the case, it is highly recommended that the course proposer provide the public information office with press releases and addresses for grassroots Irish-American publications and radio programs. Such an office has no way of knowing the communication networks of every ethnic group in the community. The course proposer may also want to ask local Irish-American organizations if they will permit a flyer to be disseminated in a subsequent membership mailing. For example, I asked the New Jersey Gaelic League if they would include a flyer with their newsletter. Although the college printed up the flyer, I physically drove the box of flyers to the NJGL president's house to make sure the flyers arrived on time. Half of the 34 students in that first adult education class came from that mailing.

If the program designer is required to develop the syllabus, he or she can ask to see the department syllabus for Spanish or French to get an idea of what will be expected of an elementary level student at that institution.[6] One might also want to contact a professional organization such as NAACLT (North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers – http://www.naaclt.org) or an organization that focuses on the needs of students such as Daltaí na Gaeilge (http://www.monmouth.com/~daltai) and

ask their membership if any samples of syllabi can be shared. Likewise, once the new course designer has developed a syllabus for an Irish course using these resources, he or she may want to share it with the membership of NAACLT or Daltaí na Gaeilge to increase the discussion of course syllabus design. An excellent venue for such sharing is the listserv discussion list CELTIC-T.[7]

TYPES OF COLLEGE CREDIT

As the syllabus is being developed, the course designer will need to keep an important issue in mind, credit applications. One often hears Irish language teachers speaking of their concern about the exclusive relegation of Irish to an adult education status and the lack of credited courses. However, credit itself is not the answer. There are many restrictions regarding how students can use credits earned (Ihde 1996 : 185). In most cases, the designer of an undergraduate course will want to obtain the right for students to be able to use credits earned while taking Irish to fulfill their general education degree requirements or foreign language requirements.

Offering Irish as an elective would also offer credit, but if students cannot apply these credits toward their degree, general education requirements, or foreign language requirements, the credit earned by taking the course will do little to help them to obtain their bachelor's degree. When students can take the proposed course because they are interested and because they can use the credits towards their general education requirement or language requirement, one will find both motivation and numbers increased. Those who offer Irish as an elective often have difficulties filling classes. One reason is tuition. Although a three-credit course at a community college may cost as little as two hundred dollars, the price of a three-credit Irish course might be unimaginable at a private institution.

TRANSFER

While community colleges can offer courses at lower tuition levels, they have another concern, credit transfer. The understanding at junior colleges is that some students will eventually transfer to four-year institutions. There is no use encouraging students to take Irish for general education or language requirement if the four-year college to which they transfer does not view Irish in the same way as the community college. In the case of BCC, I wrote the academic vice-presidents of the five senior colleges to which most of the BCC students transfer. This required several follow-up phone calls, e-mail messages, and overnight express mailings (which I paid for myself). In the end I did received a majority of institutions that claimed they would accept Irish, but it was not an easy battle. When offering the course, I informed students that one institution had claimed that they would not accept Irish. My intent was to give those students hoping to transfer to that university the opportunity to drop my class and take a more commonly taught language.

Regardless of whether an institution is a junior college or a senior college/university, students need to be warned that, since Irish is only sporadically offered throughout the country, they will need to take both Elementary Irish I and Elementary Irish II at the same institution before transferring to another college. This is especially the case if the college to which they are transferring requires two semesters of a foreign language before graduation. In other words, they could not transfer with just Irish I and expect to complete their language requirement at the other institution because the other institution most likely does not offer Irish II.

In the case of introducing Irish into a four-year college's course offerings, the above aspect is not as much of a concern. Since the senior college itself offers the bachelor's degree, it is independent to chose which language it decides to offer. However, there is still a fair number of senior

college/university students who transfer to another institution for a variety of reasons.

INTERNAL OPPOSITION

Although the example of designing and offering Irish at Bergen Community College over four years was a process met with support and success (25 students enrolled in the first semester of Elementary Irish I) opposition at similar institutions should be expected. One source of opposition might come from the very foreign language teachers that one calls colleagues. It may be felt that there is a limited pool of undergraduate students and that the proposed course will be taking students away from other language offerings. Some institutions may have only one full-time German professor, for example. This individual may be barely maintaining a full schedule, which is usually required to justify continued employment. The idea of Irish making inroads into their German language student body might be a frightening thought whether justified or not. Likewise, other full-time faculty teaching general education courses may see the proposed course as taking away students from their classes. This would especially be the case where the college does not have a language requirement and one can opt to fulfill one's general education requirement from courses offered from a number of departments. Lastly, one may find oneself in opposition with other less commonly taught languages. It might be argued by the administration that if Irish is offered, the languages of other ethnic groups present on campus will have to be offered. The designer of the Irish language courses may even find herself designing courses in another heritage language just to satisfy this administrative complaint.

One should not underestimate the amount of work and time needed to make a course part of the permanent course offerings of a college. After all the preparatory work had been completed in the Bergen example, piloting the course, building publicity, and designing syllabi, I had to seek the

approval of the foreign language department, the College-wide Curriculum Committee, and the College-wide Senate. Additionally, administrators all along the way had to be consulted. I began working on that project in 1994. The course was piloted in the spring and fall of 1995. The credited course was first offered in the fall of 1997. Although I moved to the Department of Languages and Cultures at William Paterson University in 1998, it is gratifying to see that both the undergraduate and adult education courses continue to attract students at BCC.

A CONTINUING PROCESS

I would like to close with a final note regarding publicity. If a course is going to have any future once established, it will need to be constantly publicized, even years after being established. Word of mouth of course is the best publicity. However, Irish-American newspapers and radio shows as well as local Irish-American organizations should be continually informed of registration dates.

Additionally, as the program is developed, news coverage in local and regional papers is welcomed. In addition to the above-cited *New York Times* article, articles mentioning the Irish language offerings at Bergen ran in *The Record* (Llorente 1997) and *The Weekend Jersey Journal* (Donohue 1996). I was also interviewed for WMBC's evening television news program and for a local half-hour cable program *On Campus...* (Duggan 1995). While such coverage can aid in filling a class, the best publicity at a given institution will be the college catalogue and the master list of courses. Deadlines for both of these publications are many months before the courses begin. If the new Irish course is not included in the master list of courses, the initiator of the course will have a hard time attracting students currently enrolled in the college. One consolation is that with master lists going on-line at many college web sites, the updating of the course offerings can sometimes be done at a date closer to the beginning of the semester. One important consideration is how many students are required to run a

course. In the case of a less commonly taught language that is offered in one section only, it may be advised that this number be doubled to assure enough students enroll in the second semester. For example, if one needs 12 students for the course to run, it would be best to try to have 24 students in the first semester so as to have at least 12 students in the second semester. If the institution where the course is being proposed does not have a foreign language requirement, students may be able to just take Elementary Irish I to fulfill a general education requirement.

The introduction of Irish in the Division of Continuing Education and the Division of Arts and Humanities at Bergen Community College was a rewarding experience for the students, the instructors, and the college. I hope that the above general comments and my specific examples will help other individuals introduce this language into their local community college or senior college as a general education course.

NOTES

[1]This article was originally presented in paper form at the annual meeting of the North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers in June of 1998. The conference, which was held in Minneapolis and Saint Paul, MN, was co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota and the University of St. Thomas.

[2] See Ihde 1996 and Murphy 1995. See also the LCTL Project database maintained by the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota, http://carla.acad.umn.edu/lctl/access.html and the teacher database of Daltaí na Gaeilge at http://www.monmouth.com/~daltai .

[3] The BCC courses were four contact hours per week. Most other institutions may be either three contact hours per week only or three contact hours plus one lab hour per week.

[4] See the following for more information on how these technologies can be used in language learning: Armstrong and Yetter-Vassot 1994, Kennedy 1991, and Stenson 1996.

[5] Although it is outside of the scope of this article, instructors' qualifications will be an important consideration. Some institutions will insist that the instructor have a master's in a foreign language or applied linguistics with near-native fluency in Irish. See Ihde (1997).

[6] The issue of designing an Irish language learning curriculum is not directly discussed in this article. The reader is encouraged to read Duran (1994, 1995, 1997) and Ihde (1994) regarding syllabus design of Irish courses for North Americans. Ihde (1999) provides an overview of literature in this area.

[7] I would like to thank one of the blind referees for this excellent suggestion. To subscribe to CELTIC-T, send an e-mail to listserv@VM1.SPCS.UMN.EDU with the message SUBSCRIBE CELTIC-T Yourfirstname Yourlastname.

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Department of Languages and Cultures
300 Pompton Road
Wayne, NJ 07470-2103
USA
ihdet@wpunj.edu

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LEARNING IRISH FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE IRISH LANGUAGE SPEECH COMMUNITY OUTSIDE THE GAELTACHT

MUIRIS Ó LAOIRE
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, TRALEE

Until the early seventies, Irish language pedagogy [ILP] as part of the state's interventionist role in language revival, was seen to constitute a symbiotic strategy for language maintenance, status planning and acquisition planning for the language. But since 1970, has there been a change in state policy for Irish language pedagogy? Is Irish now being taught and learned as an L2, with the objective of achieving a societal bilingualism? To what extent does learning Irish in schools at present guarantee rates of reproduction of sequential bilinguals to ensure consolidation and extension of the speech community -pobal na Gaeilge ? Pobal na Gaeilge, as well as including the territorially defined Gaeltachtaí, significantly refers to a growing number of networks of users of Irish outside that regional, territorial and linguistic entity. This paper examines the present requirements for accountability in Irish language pedagogy. [e.g. syllabus, societal bilingualism and state revival policies]. The author argues that Irish language pedagogy needs to address realistically the present focus of revival policy programmes, in order to achieve meaningful and purposeful language learning in the classroom.

Until the early seventies, as has been stated, Irish language pedagogy [ILP] as part of the state's interventionist role in the revival of Irish[1] was seen to constitute a symbiotic strategy for language maintenance, status planning and acquisition planning for the language. Status language planning was characterised by the dual policy of maintenance and revival: maintenance in the Irish

language speech communities and revival in the areas outside the geographically and linguistically defined Gaeltachtaí. (Irish language speech communities)

In status planning outside the Gaeltacht, which will be the concern in this article, the centrality of intergenerational transmission in the processes of revitalization was not stressed or was somewhat overlooked[2] Instead, it was expected that the schools could act as the principal agents of revival. In other words, it was taken for granted that Irish could be revived by an effective system of teaching the language. In fact, it could be said in hindsight that the entire burden of the revival devolved on the education system. [3]

Inherent in the policy of promoting the language in the school was an implicit understanding that, as the national or primary schools were perceived as having been the main agents in effecting a language shift to English, the process could be reversed in favor of Irish. This conviction was reflected, for example in the work of a leading educationalist in the new state, Rev.T.Corcoran, Professor of Education at University College, Dublin, most notably in *Studies* 1925, (386-387), where he wrote:

> Can the language be thus given in and through the school as a real vernacular? There is an abundance of historical evidence for an affirmative answer. It was in this way almost entirely that the English vernacular was enabled to replace the Irish tongue in Irish-speaking Ireland. Over large proportions of the country, this process of displacement developed from 1700 onwards through the local schools. It was effective above all from 1830-1850 and these were the years that really counted. The reversal of the process is equally feasible... . The popular schools can give and can restore our native language, they can do it without positive aid from the home.

In 1922 all primary (national) schools were instructed to teach Irish, or to use it as a medium of instruction for at least

half an hour a day. (INTO 1941) Subsequent policies were aimed at extending the use of Irish as a medium of instruction. In this policy-model, teaching Irish was synonymous with learning Irish. With a strong emphasis on grammar and composition, (Dept of Education: *Rialacha agus Cláir* 1924), there was also an implicit assumption that knowledge about language would lead to language use, i.e., if children knew the language that they would then speak it.[4] If students were taught Irish well, on leaving school they would speak it in their homes and in all societal domains, and in this way the language could be revived. So schools needed Irish and Irish needed schools.

Learning Irish in schools outside the Gaeltacht in the early years of the State could be interpreted as being a preparation for participation in the Irish language speech community. It could be said however, that this speech community did not exist in reality, but existed only in the expectant, in the imminent and was being created and forged in and through *the very process of preparation* itself. Ó Huallacháin (1994:116) has referred to this as implementing *a* policy through educational agencies in isolation because the necessary societal backup for achieving a language shift was not yet in place.

Tosach maith leath na hoibre. (A good beginning is half the work). In the beginning all appeared to be going well. The first Minister for Education in the new State, Eoin Mac Néill, who had once advised that the language could not be revived through the agency of the school alone (Mac Néill 1900), reported in 1923, however, that the teaching and learning of Irish was flourishing (Dáil Debates XX1). But half the work was not accomplished in this instance by a good beginning. Teachers soon started to complain as they endeavored to find out why exactly they were teaching the language and notes of despondency were also beginning to be sounded by the Department of Education itself. In its annual report of 1928-1929, the following was stated in reference to teaching Irish:

> Outside the *Gaeltacht* the progress in the use of Irish as a medium of instruction is slow....children are not speaking Irish and I regret to say that I see no signs that we will witness a reverse of the situation unless we approach the issue with a different frame of mind.

It appears that the different frame of mind called for in this report was never formulated. Right through the 1930's, 40's, 50's and 60's, while the schools conferred a high status on the language; there was a growing disjunction between the energies invested in learning the language in the classroom and the absence of opportunities outside it for using it meaningfully in a speech community context. The lack of use of Irish as a vernacular outside the Gaeltacht undermined the school/Irish symbiosis and eventually debilitated public motivation towards language learning.

Teaching a language widely and intensively which had no immediate, well-established role or status in the community resulted in poor standards. The return for all the investment and energies expended in Irish were low, producing a situation where, as Comhairle na Gaeilge (1974:3) commented:" In too many ...schools, even after 12 years' instruction, most pupils emerge unable to conduct a simple conversation in Irish."

By the mid-sixties, it was understood and accepted that the language revitalization policy had not worked and the idea that the revival of Irish through reversing language shift would gradually displace English was eventually and formally set aside in the White Paper on the Restoration of the Irish Language. (Government White Paper 1965)

IRISH IN THE SCHOOLS SINCE 1970

In the early 1970's, there was a change in state policy for Irish language pedagogy. The government in Dublin no longer pursued its policies aimed at the displacement of English by achieving Irish monolingualism (reversing language shift) and the term bilingualism began to be used

thereafter to describe the national aim *vis à vis* language restoration.

Research on language attitudes beginning with the Committee on Language Attitudes Research, (CLAR 1975) made it clear that the public espoused the restoration of Irish, but this restoration was now to occur within the context of a bilingual society. Interestingly enough, this corresponded closely to what the early *Conradh na Gaeilge* (The Gaelic League) language revivalists had originally envisaged (Ó Laoire 1996). A special body, called *Comhairle na Gaeilge,* was appointed in June 1969 to review Irish language policy and advise on its future developments.[5] It identified a new diglossic approach where selected domains of national life would be associated with Irish, Comhairle na Gaeilge (1972:7)

This posed a new and important question for Irish language pedagogy policies, namely, outside the Gaeltacht, was Irish now to be taught and learned as an L2, as part of a new strategy towards fostering bilingualism? This question was never fully answered. From the beginning in fact, the implications of this newly- formulated objective of achieving societal bilingualism for Irish language pedagogy were not very clear. Certainly the notion of creating motivation for learning and using Irish was given a new ascendancy. Comhairle na Gaeilge, in its document *Irish in Education* (1974:4), highlighted the importance of creating motivation in any new formulation of Irish language pedagogy within the framework of bilingualism. It stated:

> It would seem then that an essential part of any Irish language teaching policy would be a continuing review of the set of motivations likely to produce a widespread stimulus towards learning and speaking the language. It may be found that the new diglossia approach recommended by Comhairle na Gaeilge--that of associating selected domains of national life with Irish--would itself in time be one of the most important motivating forces in the social sphere, in

that it would provide occasions for using any Irish learned in school.

But it was not immediately obvious what the domains of Irish language use were and how much language should be taught to ensure transactional communication within these domains. Nor were the nature of the language contact and the function of the bilingualism being targeted (balanced, co-ordinate, compound etc.) very clear. Other equally significant issues were also not addressed in Irish language pedagogy policy at the time, issues such as:

- the recruitment factor: capacity of the education system for bilingual reproduction
- integration into bilingual networks

A key aspect in the maintenance of a bilingual minority is its capacity to reproduce a similar sized or an increased sized community for the next generation. The bilingual community must rely significantly on the schools to assist it in this reproductive capacity. In 1986, the CCP *(Coiste Comhairle Pleanála)* [Advisory Planning Committee] an advisory planning committee, in a report on Irish in the education system estimated that the State required each school-going cohort to contain 20%-30% competent bilinguals to maintain the then levels of bilingualism (CCP 1986:ix). The establishment, growth and development of the *naíonraí* (Irish-medium pre-schools) and Irish medium education in recent years are a step in this direction.

A second issue that Irish language pedagogy needs to address is that of issue the spatial distribution and mobility of Irish speakers in Irish speaking- networks. The pattern and nature of bilingualism or of an Irish language speech community outside the Gaeltacht is, of course, best described as being dispersed. This was and continues to be a crucial issue in the development of an effective and significantly relevant Irish language pedagogy- policy. If the school produces competent bilinguals, these bilinguals need to be able to integrate into the Irish speaking clusters or networks outside the schools. Once integrated, Irish language learning has been vindicated as being culturally meaningful and communicatively useful, learners'

interlanguage is stretched and a depth of language processing is furthered.

The question that needed to be answered in the 1970's and still requires to be addressed is: to what extent does learning Irish in schools at present guarantee rates of reproduction of sequential bilinguals to ensure consolidation and extension of the speech community -*pobal na Gaeilge* ? This question has not yet been fully addressed, because, the orientation of Irish language pedagogy within the framework of bilingual reproduction may have been side-tracked by two inter-related developments in Irish education in the eighties and nineties: i.e., expansion in post-primary education and subsequent curriculum development.

Expansion and development in post-primary education in the seventies and eighties brought ever-increasing numbers of students into the system. Among these were considerable numbers of less successful or less-academically oriented pupils who had difficulty in adapting to the dominant educational model, Ó Dubhthaigh, (1978), Ó Laoire, (1994), (1997). This resulted in concern about unprecedented rates of failure in Irish in the public examinations and about a general deterioration in standards. In the context of general curriculum reform, the need to introduce new syllabi arose out of such concern and was prompted by the general malaise in the area of Irish language pedagogy.

Most of the eighties and nineties were taken up, therefore, with syllabus reform to make the language more accessible and relevant to all students and to lower the rates of failure. The adoption of communicative-type syllabi in both junior and senior cycle programmes was undertaken deliberately by the NCCA (The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) with this background of malaise and with the objectives of accessibility and relevance in mind. But in implementing these important syllabus-related issues, we may have been side-tracked, albeit necessarily so, and have lost sight of the central issue: how learning Irish prepares us for participation in the Irish language speech community

Irish language speech communities (*Pobal na Gaeilge*), as well as including the territorially defined *Gaeltachtaí*, refers significantly to a growing number of networks of users of Irish *outside* that regional, territorial and linguistic entity both at home and abroad. Unlike the Gaeltacht, where the student of Irish may have the support mechanisms of home and neighborhood domains in sustaining or increasing proficiency through use; the school alone, for the learner of Irish as L2 outside the Gaeltacht, may indeed be the *only* source of language learning. Learning Irish in school all too often is not reinforced by participation in, and integration into the speech community. Irish-speaking networks outside the Gaeltacht have never been sufficiently numerous to form a readily identifiable and easily **visible** speech community. This distribution of Irish speaking networks poses a serious problem for the learner of Irish, particularly within the communicative framework, where the relevance of learning is wholly identified with societal use. For many students, there is no readily identifiable speech community where such communication might be meaningful other than in communicational transactions in the Gaeltacht.

The communicative-type syllabi now being taught in Irish schools imply that learners who have little or no prospect of eventually integrating into or enacting with the Gaeltacht speech community are asked to suspend disbelief as they rehearse communicative situations which can only be authentic or valid within the *Gaeltacht*.

Efforts in our Irish language classrooms intent on simulating the tourist-type situations so central to communicative pedagogy of more widely used languages have worn thin with many of our learners. It has been my experience that students have seen through the ruse, and that efforts to engage learners' motivation in mimicry of communicative situations, such as booking a room in a hostel in Cork, or asking directions while working from a map of O'Connell St., Dublin, have been doomed to arouse at best a benign indifference, even among our most eager learners. Such an approach is suitable if it is geared towards learners who will want to, or who will have to, or who will

choose to use Irish at some stage in their lives in the Irish language speech community in the Gaeltacht. But does Irish language pedagogy prepare learners to integrate into the Irish language speech community outside the Gaeltacht, if such were their choice?

It is not always easy to communicate or even to know how and when to communicate with Irish speakers outside the Gaeltacht. This is often true in the case of adult learners who embark on an adventure of improving their *cúpla focal* (a few words) by attending night classes. Things go well until they try and integrate into a cluster of Irish speakers-then things goes horribly wrong! Learners at this crucial integration-threshold stage often think that their Irish is not good enough and compare their own efforts unfavourably with the standard of the target network-group. Unfortunately, such learners often give up.[6] This points to a need not only for more research into the sociolinguistic and motivational variables of integration but also for preliminary studies of interlanguage pragmatics in the case of Irish speakers. (The latter would be to provide data, for example on the nature of illocutionary acts among speakers belonging to the Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht speech communities)

What should we be teaching our students at primary and at post-primary levels? Is the communicative approach out of place, irrelevant and unhelpful for the majority of our learners who will never come into contact with the *Gaeltacht* speech community?

The CEB (Curriculum and Examination Board) document which preceded syllabus definition argued that the classroom itself must be used to motivate learners at least in the short term (CEB:31), by creating a need to use Irish in the accomplishment of meaningful activities which appeal to their interests and imagination. It states that: 'the classroom is therefore a valid communicative situation, which can in itself be exploited as a valuable resource for learning. To view it merely as a rehearsal studio for the world outside is an approach unlikely to sustain the motivation of many

learners of Irish.' This approach, however, has sustained motivation for many of us teachers in the classroom (Ó Laoire 1994b). The problem with this model, however, is that if school is the only place that Irish is meant to be used, then students, when school is out, forget Irish and see it as something irrelevant. Irish like homework, rules and uniform is best forgotten outside school

A problem in Irish language pedagogy in recent years, therefore has been the tendency for syllabus design and for language revival policies towards achieving societal bilingualism to occur more or less independently of each other. To re-align Irish language pedagogy with revival policies, the organizing principle for syllabus design needs to be more answerable to how, where and why Irish is used in the Irish language speech community Irish language pedagogy needs to address realistically therefore, the present focus of revival policy programs, as well as to empower learners to be more aware of the Irish language context and the process of language learning itself, in order to achieve meaningful and purposeful language learning.

NOTES

[1] See Ó Riagáin, P (1997) for a comprehensive description of the historical background to the development of Irish language revivalist policies, also Ó Riain (1994). See also IJSL 70 (1988) for a discussion on various aspects of policy implementation in status and corpus planning, especially Commins (1988), Tovey (1988) and Ó Baoill (1988). For a discussion of the role of the state in the revival, see Ó Laoire (1996).

[2] Fishman (1991:128) in an analysis of the 1981 Census data refers for example to the glaring failure of Irish language policies in the past to follow-up the well educated who have mastered Irish during school attendance so that, they could more easily form Irish-speaking (or, at least bilingual) speech communities in their post-school years

and, thereby, transmit the Irish which they have acquired to a successive generation.

[3] See Benton (1986) for an interesting discussion on the role of the schools as agents of revival in the Irish and New Zealand contexts. For more information on the role of the Irish language in education from 1831 onwards, see Ó Buachalla (1984), also Ó Riagáin (1997: Chapter 7). Ó Súilleabháin (1988) gives a good account of the historical background to the role of Irish in the schools.

[4] Coolahan (1981:223) notes that the failure of the system to restore the spoken language to any extent can be partly attributed to the stress laid on the written language rather than on oral fluency.

[5] Among Comhairle na Gaeilge's main recommendations was the establishment of an agency with special responsibility for the restoration and maintenance of Irish. This agency, *Bord na Gaeilge,* was established in 1975, becoming a statutory agency in 1978.

[6] One such learner in his late twenties told me in a private communication (as part of a forthcoming research study) that he had taken night classes in Irish for over two years and was reasonably proficient in class. He reported difficulty however, when trying to integrate in to Irish speaking networks *outside* class. He found that some speakers either reverted to English when he joined in conversations or that he, himself said very little and felt uncomfortable, even when he understood the gist of certain conversations and interactions conducted entirely in Irish. He has since abandoned hope of ever being able to speak the language well and to be a part of an Irish speaking network.

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Department of Languages and Communication,
Tralee, Co. Kerry,
Éire
molaoire@tinet.ie

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GAELIC LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE TYPOLOGIES AND CONSTRUCTS

KARA A. SMITH
UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Reported within this paper are the qualitative results of a 1995-1997 ethnographic study of seventeen Gaelic language users living within English speaking areas of Canada and Scotland. Subjects Àileas, Aonghas, Artair, Anna, Aigneas, Tara, Tollaidh, Cairistìona, and Colla (all names are fictional), were observed for a period of nine days. The subjects kept a written journal in which they recorded their thoughts and feelings about Gaelic, their Gaelic worlds in the English community, and their Gaelic language maintenance within an English community. These records formed two typologies, 'Levels of Gaelic Speech Competence' and 'Gaelic Social Roles'; and two language maintenance constructs, 'Interactive Gaelic Work' and 'Interlinguistic Relations'. The typologies and constructs of these successful Gaelic language maintenance users interact dynamically to identify other speakers' reference groups and, based on the reference group identified, whether the user would choose to engage in a sustained Gaelic conversational episode with the other speaker. Results identified a 'common sense' ethnographic method of evaluating levels of Gaelic speech ability and Gaelic roles by using the natural terms of the lesser-used language community studied.

INTRODUCTION

The following socioethnographic study of Gaelic language maintenance explores the Gaelic worlds of seventeen Gaelic speakers living within English dominated communities. Àileas, Aonghas, Artair, Anna, Aigneas, Tara,

Tollaidh, Cairistiona, and Colla are just nine of the subjects who will be introduced within this paper. (All of the subjects names, and the names of individuals connected to the subjects, have been changed in this writing for the purpose of anonymity.) During the two-year period of observation, the subjects kept written journal records where they recorded their own thoughts and observations about Gaelic language maintenance within an English environment, and where they commented on their own local Gaelic communities. The purpose of the research was to explore the 'isolated' Gaelic world and to identify ways in which that world could be construed. This marked the beginning of greater insight into successful Gaelic language maintenance in English communities.

Due to the qualitative and individual nature of the study, unique research literature was used to gain a greater understanding of the individual and her/his Gaelic language maintenance process. Individual members, and respected authors, of the Gaelic community, such as Anne Lorne Gillies (1991), Angus MacLellan (1997), Margaret Fay Shaw (1993), and Mary & Hector MacIver (1990), who had written autobiographies about their Gaelic lives, along with local ethnic Scottish and Canadian newspaper editorials, were used to validate the common terms and constructs identified in the research findings. In this way, the published autobiographies of Gaelic community members, printed letters to newspaper editors, and the journals and observations of the subjects themselves, provided a rich ethnographic resource of the typologies and constructs used by Gaelic speakers to identify language development, and skill, and to enable language maintenance opportunities. Being able to identify these community language constructs allowed Gaelic learners to evaluate their own language acquisition progress alongside the 'common sense' terms and standards that they would encounter within the Gaelic world itself. The typology, 'Levels of Gaelic Competency' identifies the terms commonly used to evaluate a Gaelic speaker's ability; the typology, 'Gaelic Social Roles' identifies the titles commonly given to specific members of

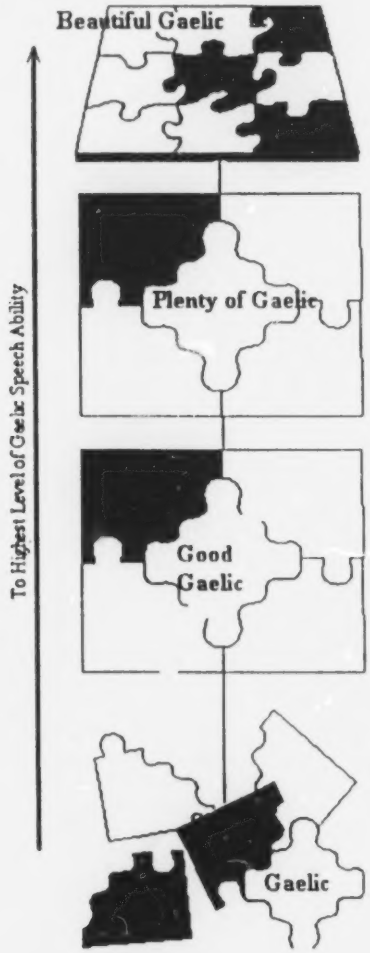
an isolated Gaelic community. These two typologies interact dynamically, for a speaker, to help match the 'ability' and 'role' of another speaker with the former's reference group. A match typically results in a sustained Gaelic language maintenance episode. Two constructs, "Interactive Gaelic Work' and 'Interlinguistic Relations' describe the most prominent challenges that a Gaelic speaker encounters while trying to maintain her/his level of Gaelic within an English speaking *milieu*.

LEVELS OF GAELIC COMPETENCY

Gaelic speakers attempting to maintain their language within an English environment, construe their world in one of two typologies which makes reference to several categories of ability. The subjects participating in this study, and Gaelic autobiographers (Gillies, 1991; MacLellan, 1997; Shaw, 1993; MacIver & MacIver, 1990), use a common-sense method of identifying and locating one's Gaelic speech ability in relation to the social world of Gaelic speakers. Identifying a person's 'level of Gaelic competency' within this typology is a critical feature for making decisions about what to say to whom, and whether the individual addressed fits one's conception of a Gaelic speaker within one's reference group. This, in turn, determines whether Gaelic maintenance will occur. It is this insider typology for identifying language progress or development which becomes one of the first identifying characteristics in Gaelic language maintenance.

The subjects within this study categorise knowledge of Gaelic into four levels of speech ability. Those levels have been defined by the subjects in the following order of speaker competence: 'Gaelic', 'Good Gaelic', 'Plenty of Gaelic', and 'Beautiful Gaelic'(as illustrated within the figure on the following page). Within each of these four categories of Gaelic competency, there are several additional definitions of speaker ability (as further defined in the next section, 'Gaelic Social Roles'). These 'Roles' become a self-referencing, or self-identifying, framework which enables the

speaker to categorise her/his, and others, knowledge of Gaelic in relation to the social language framework established by the group.



The first level of Gaelic competency, 'Gaelic', or 'having the Gaelic' (without any preceding adjectives), describes an individual who possesses the basic grammatical structure of the language, but lacks an extended vocabulary or the ability to form complex sentences. For example, one subject, Àileas, evaluated her friend's level of Gaelic ability as '[having] Gaelic', basic Gaelic. She stated, "Jimmy doesn't have very good Gaelic, but he has it." Àileas, herself, has attempted to learn more songs and vocabulary so that she may progress to the next level, "Good Gaelic".

Angus MacLellan (1997), in his autobiographical discussion of Perthshire Gaelic, also describes this initial stage of Gaelic ability with the term 'Gaelic'. He states, "[their] Gaelic couldn't be worse if they had learnt it from the crows", and "...the Gaelic there in Perthshire, indeed it wasn't good Gaelic" (MacLellan, 1997 : 42-43). Here, he identifies both the first and second levels of the social typology of Gaelic levels of competency. The individuals in Perthshire "had Gaelic", but they did not have "Good Gaelic". Thus, their Gaelic ability had been posited by MacLellan in the first level of competency in the Gaelic social world.

Similarly, Anne Lorne Gillies describes the beginning stages of Gaelic learning in Oban, as "having the Gaelic" and "awful pidgin Gaelic" (Gillies, 1991). According to Gillies' social account (1991), this beginning stage of Gaelic competency is simply called "Gaelic", so basic in its form that it is "pidgin", or an underdeveloped hybrid of Gaelic and English. For the 6-year-old Gillies recalling this level of speech ability, this was a pejorative value judgement. For a language to survive in a real speech community, it must have a number of speakers who are highly fluent; however, it merits mentioning that "pidgin" or basic 'Gaelic' may illustrate a dynamic process at work in which the speaker is highly engaged in language maintenance and attainment. Gillies' comment, in this sense, could be understood as a developmental process. For example, a person with 'pidgin' or basic 'Gaelic', from a linguist's view, may simply be acquiring language through Selinker's (1992) successive interlanguage process. The elementary 'Gaelic' may be the result of the creation of a set of rules, which, over time, allows the speaker to learn the language. As a value judgement, this first level of 'Gaelic' ability may sound crude to a native speaker, but it is quite possible that the individual is simply exhibiting her/his on-going development of language acquisition.

Within this first category of Gaelic competence, we may discuss two other distinctions - "school Gaelic" and "everyday Gaelic". An adolescent Scottish subject, Tollaidh,

best describes the difference between these two social typologies of speech when she explains her fears of speech inadequacy with her cousins in Uist:

> Their Gaelic is just so good. They have *plenty* of Gaelic. Sometimes I think that my accent sounds stupid...because my Gaelic is school Gaelic, and they know how to say things in everyday Gaelic which is much more cool (Tollaidh, 1997).

Tollaidh feels that she lacks the "everyday" vernacular to sound "cool"; that her "Gaelic" only contains features learned in school, rather than common, pop idiom. Byram (1989) describes this phenomenon as "referential meaning". To be maintained and thrive, a language must include the features necessary for individuals at all ages and in all contexts (Moffatt, 1999). If the subject Tollaidh, in this case, were more familiar with the local Gaelic idiom of her peers in Uist, then she would feel more confident in using it, and in return, in maintaining it.

The second level of Gaelic competency, 'Good Gaelic', contains the "everyday Gaelic" mentioned above by subject Tollaidh. It is a non-institutionalised vernacular possessing the basic grammatical structure of the language. One Canadian subject, Anna, for example, is cautious about being interviewed on the BBC Highland radio programme, *Radio nan Gaidheal,* because she wants her Gaelic "to be good". Anna states:

> I had to be careful about what I said because I knew that all of my friends back home would be listening and I wanted my Gaelic to be good (Anna, 1997).

In Anna's case, "Good Gaelic" is the acceptable level of Gaelic speech ability for a radio interview. Anna also reported that "[her] Gaelic is good due to all of her trips home" to Lewis. Another adolescent Scottish subject,

Teàrlag, reported that "[she] wished she could speak good Gaelic, but right now she just barely has it." A child, Canadian subject, Cairistiona, was convinced that "good Gaelic" could be inherited genetically, since she related that her "uncle spoke good Gaelic, so [she] will probably speak good Gaelic as well some day!" Finally, an adult Canadian subject, Artair, further defines this level of Gaelic ability by including specific 'Gaelic social types' (discussed further in this paper) within his narrative. Artair says of another speaker, "James has incredible modern Gaelic. It's good, yes, he has a Gaelic word for everything from electronics to subways." Thus, although James possessed a fluent command of the language, Artair was puzzled by James' diction. "James has good Gaelic", but it would be unlikely that he would ever be capable of attaining the highest level of ability, 'Beautiful Gaelic'. 'Good Gaelic', then, refers to basic fluency. Speakers at this level of ability are beyond the beginning stages of learning, are capable of conversing fluently, but are yet to possess the natural idiom and flow of the language.

The third level of Gaelic social speech ability was identified by the subjects as 'Plenty of Gaelic'. This stage meant that the speaker was capable of conversing in complex grammatical forms, had an extended vocabulary in several vernaculars and argots, and/or used Gaelic more than English as a form of communication. This, for most accomplished and educated Gaels, is the top level in Gaelic competency. Its institutionalised equivalent might be "advanced Gaelic" or a "Gaelic higher", as those categories may be defined within the curriculum or syllabus of the time. This level, like the previous two, is also a social construct, rather than an empirical measurement of one's linguistic ability. Tollaidh, a Scottish adolescent subject, uses this qualifier to describe her Uist cousins who have "everyday Gaelic" (as mentioned earlier). She says of the teenagers on Uist, "kids there have plenty of Gaelic". When asked what this means, Tollaidh responds, "they know all kinds of

words and sayings I've never heard of, and they use Gaelic all the time - more than English!"

Tara, a Canadian adolescent, states that her friend, Tòmasina, has "plenty of Gaelic". She says, "Tòmasina has plenty of Gaelic because she worked on Skye. She knows all kinds of phrases that I've never, ever learned." Thus, "plenty of Gaelic" indicates a level of Gaelic speech ability which includes both fluency, local idiom, and traditional expression. Speakers at this social level of speech competence not only possess a strong grammatical command of the language, they possess something of greater importance within Gaelic circles - the natural, organic method of communicating through Gaelic.

There are also two other terms commonly associated with Gaelic speech ability which may be mentioned here. Among social speakers, there is a distinguishing feature between an 'Original, Native Gaelic Speaker' and a 'Gaelic Learner'. For example, if Gaelic was the speaker's birth language (L1), and the speaker still had Gaelic fluently as an adult, then s/he may be called either a 'Native' or a 'Gaelic Speaker'. If, however, the speaker learned Gaelic as the second or third (L2 or L3) language, that is, it was not the birth language (L1), then s/he would always be a 'Gaelic Learner', regardless of fluency in the language. One Scottish subject, for example, consistently identifies herself as a 'Gaelic Learner' even though she has spoken, and worked in the medium of Gaelic for 10 years. Without the 'Plentiful' vernacular, or being born to it, "[she] was not a Gaelic speaker." An L2 (or L3) speaker, regardless of how advanced her/his Gaelic, could never progress past the third level of ability, 'Plenty of Gaelic'. An L1 speaker, or 'Native Speaker', however, might be categorised as having 'Beautiful Gaelic'.

The fourth, and final, stage of Gaelic competency is 'Beautiful Gaelic'. This level is reserved, socially, for accomplished Gaelic speakers, or writers, who have the gift of poetry in their words. Similar to Abraham Maslow's 'Actualisation Stage', it is not attained very often. Having 'Beautiful Gaelic' is the ultimate in creative Gaelic language

genius; it is the traditional, aboriginal form of the language as it has been used by bards in the bloc. An adult subject, Aonghas, states that these speakers have a natural talent for "turning a phrase". They are capable of "using a proverb to describe an event or idea the way it is traditionally perceived from a Gaelic viewpoint." 'Beautiful Gaelic' is authentic *Gàidhealach* [1] . Artair, a Canadian adult subject, describes a speaker he met at a conference as having "beautiful Gaelic, like the angels." This is high praise indeed if your language ability is next to God's. Àileas details 'Beautiful Gaelic' when she describes a Cape Breton poet/speaker of whom she is fond. She states that, "his speech is 'peppered' with unique turns of phrase and stories; his Gaelic has a natural, lyrical, poetic quality to it." Anne Lorne Gillies (1991), uses 'Beautiful Gaelic' to describe native singers whom she met just once in her life. Gillies states:

> She's from Islay and she has a beautiful Islay Gaelic...Mary and Flora are such beautiful Gaelic speakers, so full of fun and Tiree air (Gillies, 1991).

'Beautiful Gaelic', according to Gillies, is the ability to 'turn a phrase' the way it was traditionally meant to be said and perceived. Both of the speakers that Gillies describes are from a Gaelic bloc, and as a result, possess some quality of speech which is intimately linked to the traditional Gaelic of that area. Their Gaelic is 'Beautiful' because it is not only fluent, it possesses all of the characteristics of their native homes as well as a poetic quality. In Cape Breton and Ontario, Canada, an individual with 'Beautiful Gaelic', almost without exception, will be a 'storyteller' as well (a 'role' further defined in this paper). Àileas, a Cape Breton subject, describes the late 'Joe Neil MacNeil' as one such example of an individual (and 'storyteller') possessing 'Beautiful [poetic] Gaelic'. In Scotland, the equivalent may have been poets such as Sorley MacLean and Iain Crichton Smith. Such individuals not only have an exceptional skill with the

language, but they have important, distinguished 'roles' in the community as figures of Gaelic skill and prominence. Amongst the subjects studied, it was unheard of an L2 speaker to have 'Beautiful Gaelic'.

Thus, to some extent, the level of someone's Gaelic speech ability (defined in this section) also provides the speaker with an indication of the speaker's role in the community as well. It is, in this way, that the typology of 'Gaelic speech competence' and the typology of 'Gaelic social roles' interact. Together, the two typologies form the early part of an individual's Gaelic language maintenance process. They enable the speaker to make decisions about other speakers, how they will interact with her/him, and how long s/he may sustain the conversation based on this evaluation.

GAELIC SOCIAL ROLES

The two typologies, 'Levels of Gaelic Competency' and 'Gaelic Social Roles', dynamically interact with one another in the language maintenance process to identify a speaker and confirm a subject's identity status within her/his symbolic reference group. The following is a typology which has been constructed to represent and define the stereotypical roles identified within the isolated Gaelic community. The typology, in connection with 'Levels of Gaelic Competence', attempts to illustrate how some of these roles interact with the process of Gaelic language maintenance.

The Gaelic community, like many other isolated minority language communities, is filled with an assortment of role players. While a couple of the 'Gaelic Roles', identified below by subject Àileas, are disparaging, each holds a unique agenda and valuable function within the Gaelic community. Àileas, describes various Gaelic stereotypes, or roles, as she commonly perceives them, and comments on her concerns for the lack of organisation and vision amongst role players. Àileas feels that a more common perspective is needed within the Gaelic community before Gaelic will

have the social support and health it requires to become a living language in Canada.[2] The following is the narrative taken from Àileas' interviews and journal writings:

> They're 'the Gaelic Mafia.' If anything is happening in the world of the Gael, then they know about it first, and will quietly give their opinion on it. They reject anything that is institutionalised. 'To be a true Gael, you must live as they did,' which, I guess, is on the verge of poverty, and perhaps they're right. There are a lot of things that I don't like about the school and the Gaelic college either, mainly the fact that they cater to *Beurla*, alienating a lot of ageing speakers, but that's something you can work with. It can work. There are just so many different opinions. On the one hand, there is Mary and her Gaelic Mafia, who form the core of young speakers. Then there's people like James and Brendon, the nouveau Gaels or business men, who view Gaelic as some large, hippie money-making grant venture. Then Isobel, who believes that we should revitalise Gaelic by importing the language and material from Scotland. There are storytellers like Seumas and Donald, now passed, who volunteered at the school and gave unselfishly of their time. I don't know (Àileas, 1997).

Àileas calls these roles "denominations of Gaelic", which is particularly useful because it connects the concept of a philosophical approach to language maintenance and the Gaelic role one plays in accordance with the 'religious' position, or vision, of the language's goal in the community. As there are varying degrees of Christianity, so there are as many interpretations and visions of what Gaelic should be. The speakers and players whom Àileas describes are

commonly recognised amongst Gaelic community members through eight common terms. These terms represent the typification of categories of Gaelic members as represented in the research. They are: the Mafia leader, the academic, the businessman or media type, the nouveau Gael, the storyteller, the native speaker, the learner (mentioned in the previous typology with 'natives'), and the imported *Gàidhealach.* Each of these roles has been documented in one or more of the subject's narratives (Smith, 1997), as well as in research literature, autobiographical literature, literary texts, and Gaelic newspaper commentaries.

The 'Gaelic Mafia', or sometimes the 'MacMafia', is often used as a term for those selected, few individuals who control public funding for Gaelic organisations and causes, or who control the various political wings of Gaelic opinion within larger, governmental functions. It is a term often used in resentment, and will often describe a feeling for what is believed to be a non-democratic, non-accountable process within the Gaelic community at large. Neil Gunn (1987) writes of the 'Gaelic Mafia' and their numbers that can be "counted on your fingers" in a letter to C.M. Grieve (1932, July 9). Also, one letter from a K.G. Finlayson to the Editor of the *Stornoway Gazette* (1997, January 1)[3] accuses members of the *Comhairle* of being part of the "*Gaidhlig* Mafia" intent on using public funding without accountability. Artair, a Canadian adult subject, reported that he recalls a figure commonly known as "Sam Bananas", (not his real name), as the first "Gaelic Mafia member" he remembers. Artair states that at the turn of the 20th Century, the priests from a county in Nova Scotia, a Gaelic bloc at the time, would always receive places of prominence in the Dioceses, and due to these prestigious appointments, they became known as "the Gaelic Mafia". Today, "the Gaelic Mafia", in Canada and in Scotland, refers not to priests, but to individuals who control public funding for Gaelic initiatives without the benefit of democratic accounting.

'The academic' describes that individual who is an accomplished, institutionalised Gaelic scholar, and who, perhaps, holds an academic post or Celtic chair in one of the

mainland's universities. It may also describe an individual who is commonly associated with Gaelic research within the Gaelic community. Frank Vallee (1954) first documented this term in his Ph.D. research. Vallee describes the 'Gaelic scholar' as one who is 'immersed in the traditions and literature, self-consciously Gaelic, and assertive of standards of purity'. In interview, adult Scottish subject, Aonghas, also describes 'the academic' as someone who is 'assertive of standards of [language] purity', but who is more commonly viewed through her/his post of employment, rather than an ideal philosophical image.

'The storyteller', albeit common in Canada and Cape Breton, is not often heard in Scotland. Joe Neil MacNeil, of Cape Breton, for instance, was often called, 'a storyteller' and his level of Gaelic ability, according to Canadian subject Àileas, was 'Beautiful'. Another subject's great grandfather, from Ontario, "old Mr. MacLeod", was also known locally as a 'storyteller' (Smith, 1997). 'The storyteller', what used to be known as a 'bard' in Scotland, is an individual who possesses a 'Beautiful Gaelic' ability. S/he has the gift of lyrics, her/his speech is "peppered with Gaelic idiom" (as Canadian subject Àileas describes), and s/he speaks the aboriginal form of the language. In Canada, a 'storyteller' is best known for her/his ghost stories, and when present at a ceilidh, attracts a large crowd of listeners. The 'storyteller' is a socially prized commodity. The term was used frequently in the Winter 1996/97 edition of *Am Bràighe* to describe Eòs MacNìll of Big Pond, Nova Scotia. 'Storytellers' have not been educated formally, like 'the academic', but nevertheless, possess the depleting 'turns of phrases' and old stories of the Gaelic community which make them truly *Gàidhealach*. '*Sàr-sgeulaiche*[4] is still a term heard frequently to describe the old, aboriginal speakers of Cape Breton, Canada.

'The businessman' or 'media type' is a role that is commonly described in Scotland, but not in Canada. Subjects Àileas and Aonghas use this term frequently to describe those individuals who are thought to take

advantage of public money and funding for Gaelic initiatives, which, currently in Scotland, is usually television and radio programming. These speakers, like the 'academic', are identified according to their occupation. They are also very well known for their curious Gaelic vocabulary which is used to modernise the language in competition with English media technological advances.

A 'native speaker', as the term has been defined in the previous section, such as Scottish subject Aonghas, may often be heard speaking about a 'media type' as follows, "indeed, he has good Gaelic, but I cannot understand a word he says." The vocabulary and grammar is precise, but it is not organised in a method which would be natural for organic Gaelic speech.

'A nouveau Gael', or occasionally, 'a new-age Gael', describes a Gaelic 'Learner' (L2/3 speaker) who is perceived to be a part of a popular, 'hippie' Celtic cultural movement. Sometimes, a 'nouveau Gael' may describe an individual who has an arresting facility for the language and who has an equivalent Gaelic word for every contemporary technological English word unknown to 'Native Speakers' (L1). This role was described earlier in the previous section by Canadian subject Artair, and is recounted here as follows, by Scottish subject, Aonghas:

> [A nouveau Gael] is a zealous learner who is adamant about the use and endless promotion of the language, sometimes to the point where such militancy becomes frightening or uncomfortable for older, native speakers who are not accustomed to such interest in the formerly *teuchter* language (Aonghas, 1997).

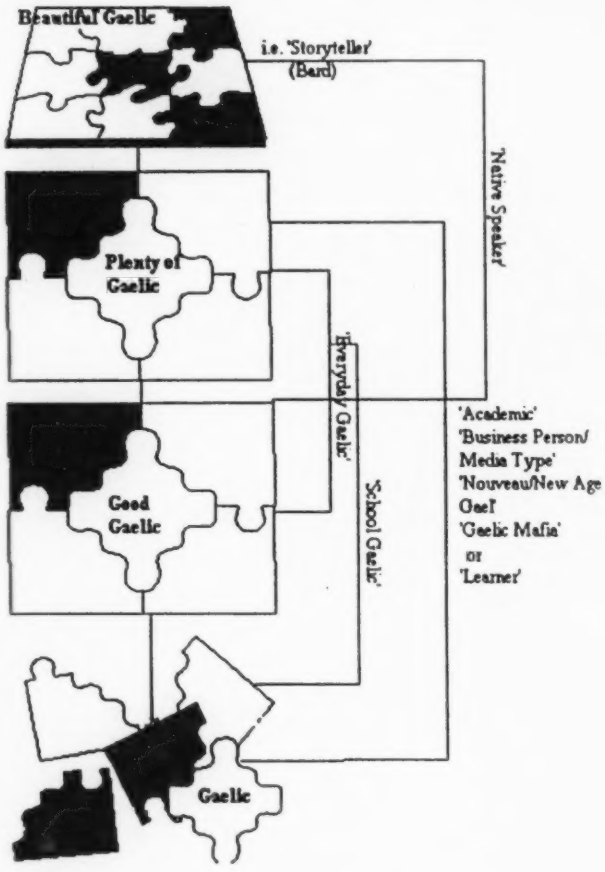
Such 'fanaticism' is unusual to encounter for many older, reserved native speakers. Thus, to distance themselves from this unusual phenomenon, they identify this role rapidly and will often code switch to English when they feel uncomfortable in the conversation. At the outrage of

several members of the Gaelic community in Scotland, one P.H. Hainsworth used this term recklessly in a letter to the editor of the *West Highland Free Press* (1996, 20 September). Hainsworth describes a "nouveau Gael" as a "Gaelic hippie zealot".

'The import', or 'imported *Gàidhealach'*, is reserved almost exclusively for the Canadian Gaelic community. 'The import' prefers the Gaelic dialect of the Western Islands of Scotland to the Cape Breton dialect of Canada. The term, 'imported Gaelic' is often used in a derogatory fashion, since there is a general desire to preserve that dialect of Gaelic which is natural to Canada, rather than relying on 'imported' versions of the language from 'the old country'. For example, one subject, Àileas, uses it with disdain when she discusses a teacher who is teaching the 'imported Gaelic' at the local college, rather than the 'Cape Breton Gaelic'. For the most part, there is a recognition that 'Cape Breton Gaelic' originated from Barra, and other parts of the island; however, since, in some cases, the transfer was over six generations ago, subjects feel a more intense attachment to the Cape Breton bloc than 'the old country', there is a desire to preserve the Gaelic that was original to that part of Canada. One would not say that, socially, the 'importer' is not welcome, but that the 'aboriginal' is more welcome because s/he is more rare.

These eight typifications of Gaelic speaker roles form the stereotypes of the Canadian and Scottish Gaelic communities living within English dominated areas. These roles relate interactively with the typology of 'Gaelic levels of competence' (discussed in the previous section), as a method by which speakers identify each other. This is an important, ongoing social interaction because identifying one with the speaker's own reference group prolonged Gaelic conversational episodes, which, in turn, increased successful language maintenance. Meetings outside of the speaker's self-identified reference group shortened the Gaelic conversational episode and decreased language

maintenance. For example, the two typologies interact with each other in the following illustrated manner:



As mentioned previously, and as is illustrated above, a 'Learner' (L2/3 speaker) cannot attain the level of 'Beautiful Gaelic' competency, which is commonly reserved for 'Native (L1) Speakers' with exceptional language ability. An individual described as having 'Everyday Gaelic' would commonly be evaluated as 'Good' or 'Plenty of Gaelic' ability. Many of the roles, with the exception of the 'storyteller' exist somewhere between the Gaelic speech levels of 'Good' to 'Plenty of Gaelic'.

The two interactive typologies are used by speakers to ascertain whether another speaker is a member of her/his particular Gaelic-speaking reference group. For example,

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a question subconsciously being asked by the subjects studied in this process is, 'Can this person help, through a conversational episode, help to confirm my [Gaelic] identity?' Two case examples may be examined to view this process in action. Àileas, a Canadian adult speaker, for instance, will first evaluate an individual according to her/his appearance and perceived 'role'. Based on the 'role' she identifies in the other speaker, Àileas proceeds to evaluate the 'person's level of Gaelic competence'. If, upon this second evaluation, she regards the speaker as a member of her own perceived reference group, she will then proceed to engage in a sustained Gaelic conversation. If, however, the individual is not a member of this reference group, she will then proceed to code switch to English. With Àileas, this process is carried out consistently, except in the case of encountering a 'storyteller'. A 'storyteller' would not be a member of Àileas' reference group, but would still be an individual with whom she would wish to learn from and sustain a conversation. Thus, with the exception of a superior speaker, Àileas' evaluation of the role, then the level of ability, must be in accordance with her own perception of her role and ability prior to a successful language maintenance episode occurring.

Aonghas, on the other hand, a Scottish adult 'academic', will evaluate the other speaker in a slightly different fashion. Aonghas will not code switch due to an incongruence in reference group identification, but will code switch to English should the other speaker initiate the switch because s/he felt uncomfortable. This distinction is due largely to Aonghas' own role, and preference towards meeting other unique individuals (not necessarily of his own reference group). Thus, in consideration for the other speaker, Aonghas will first evaluate her/his level of speech ability. This will determine the level of conversation with which to proceed. Following this evaluation, the 'Gaelic role' is determined, which will decide the topical area for conversation. If, by chance, the speaker is a member of

Aonghas' reference group, that is, another 'academic', then the conversation is sustained for a longer and more involved time period. If, however, the other speaker is not a part of Aonghas' perceived reference group, then the conversation will continue at another level until it comes to its natural conclusion, or until the other speaker code switches. In this manner, Aonghas maintains Gaelic conversational opportunities by adjusting to the 'competency' and 'role' of the speaker he encounters; whereas, Àileas will only maintain Gaelic conversational episodes if the speaker encountered is evaluated to be a member of her same, social Gaelic reference group.

Subjects make decisions about their Gaelic language usage and maintenance based upon their primary goals for sustaining their identity through desired reference group confirmations. Each decision made about another speaker is designed to enhance the subject's own Gaelic language identity construct. Recognition of these 'levels of Gaelic competency' and 'Gaelic social roles', existing in Gaelic communities isolated from a bloc group of speakers, are important for increasing successful language maintenance opportunities within the community amongst reference group members. The ability to identify the skill level and role a speaker has within the community will enable the chances for prolonged Gaelic conversational episodes (leading to greater maintenance) and greater tolerance by accomplished speakers for learners unfamiliar with this ethnographic strata.

INTERACTIVE GAELIC WORKERS

Code switching from Gaelic to English provides particular difficulties for successful Gaelic language maintenance within an English speaking area. One construct providing greater insight into Gaelic code switching is that of 'interactive work' (Fishman, 1978). 'Interactive work' is a term borrowed from feminist writing. It is not surprising, then, that the subjects who most often exhibited 'interactive work' were indeed female.

'Interactive work' refers to those social language tasks which seek to include isolated community members in the conversation. Subjects Àileas, Tollaidh, and Colla, most notably, switch from Gaelic speech to English speech for the following two reasons:

1. "To be polite"
2. "To include English speakers in the conversation"

As one might imagine, in predominantly English speaking areas, this 'interactive work' occurs quite frequently since English speakers involved in the periphery conversation are numerous. Àileas, for example, explains why a group of five conversing Gaelic speakers would suddenly switch to English upon the arrival of only one English speaking individual. She states, "John's wife doesn't speak Gaelic so you wouldn't want to exclude her ...it's only right." Similarly, Tollaidh "gets used to speaking English out of habit because it's polite...if someone talks to you in one language, then it would be rude to answer in another." 'Interactive Gaelic work', or code switching, is viewed as the only method for making an external language member feel included within the dynamics of the Gaelic speaking group. The subjects here, who were all living in English speaking areas, switched consistently from Gaelic to English to include unknown members who were assumed to be English monoglots. This construct also interacts frequently with the typology of 'Gaelic social roles'. Àileas, as mentioned in the previous section, for example, will code switch to English upon identifying the 'role' of the other speaker. In this case, the 'role' that is identified, is that of an 'English speaker', and hence, the code switch would occur immediately (prior to any conversation).

This language construct is certainly 'polite' and 'nice', as the subjects explain, but it is also a detriment to sustained, successful maintenance. What if the new member of the conversational group wanted to learn Gaelic? If s/he requested that they continue in the Gaelic medium? Would

the new member feel uncomfortable, as the speakers seem to think s/he would? Would the original speakers feel uncomfortable about continuing? If one wished to maintain the birth (L1) language, as a conservative Quebeçois might, should the medium conversation not be sustained until the majority of language speakers warranted a switch? While 'interactive work' is generous community building, it also sabotages Gaelic language maintenance opportunities within an English speaking area. Accommodating a minority member's feelings should not become so necessary that rare, Gaelic language maintenance episodes are eliminated.

INTERLINGUISTIC RELATIONS

One final construct which has been construed as a challenge to successful Gaelic language maintenance is that of 'interlinguistic relations'. An item that was most notable about the successfully maintaining adults within this study is that they were all single, with the exception of 'Aonghas', whose marital and parental relationships were strained due to his language choice and commitments.

Gaelic spouses or peers who possess mono-English partners experience greater difficulty maintaining their Gaelic language than those who are partnered with another Gaelic speaker or learner (Gillies, 1991; MacLellan, 1997; Shaw, 1993; MacIver & MacIver, 1990). Finlay Macleod's 'theory of language bonding[5] and MacKinnon's (1997) review of the 1995 *Euromosaic* support this view.

Macleod maintains that if a 'Gaelic bond' is not established within the first few weeks of any personal or familial relationship, then it is unlikely that the relationship will continue within the medium of Gaelic unless a great deal of effort is made by both parties to ensure that the relationship is built within the medium of Gaelic. Yamamoto (1995) documented similar research between the language selection of children and parents. This 'language bond' is usually a conscious decision made by

the parents prior, or shortly after, the arrival of children. The linguistic choice of the parents and the children is dependent upon the emotional language bond *originally* established within the home. Heller (1995) found that the peer environment, especially during the period of early adolescence, was the determinant in support or elimination of the language chosen. Thus, each individual's choice of the medium of language to be used within their personal relationship is immediately dependent upon the language first used in their bonding, or introduction, to another. For example, not one child or adolescent in this study possessed peers with whom they communicated in the medium of Gaelic. The pre-adults had all established 'English bonds' with their friends.

In general, English medium language between peers and spouses was quite pervasive amongst the subjects of this study. For example, Aonghas reported experiencing a great deal of inner anxiety over his own language maintenance and his relationship with his son and his English wife. One child's mother, a Gaelic L2 speaker, who had raised her daughter in the medium of Gaelic, stated, "I think I could have been a better mother in English. I just didn't know all of those little words like 'nappie', 'pin', 'cuddle', or lullaby's which made my own relationship with my [English] mother so rich." The subjects who did, in fact, possess Gaelic spouses or peers, such as adults Anna and Aigneas, experienced greater ease in maintaining their Gaelic and in making linguistic choices.

The linguistic choice that subject Aonghas experienced may have been created by anxiety (Lawrence, 1987), but more likely, it is created by the individual's own wish to confirm his status and membership within the desired reference group of Gaelic speakers. Aonghas describes this linguistic tension best when he describes his relationship with his son. He is determined to establish a 'Gaelic bond' with his son, and as a result, speaks with him only in Gaelic. However, the child spends a greater

proportion of his time with his English speaking mother. Aonghas describes this disunion as follows:

> I know that he understands some Gaelic, however, I'm not certain how developed his Gaelic comprehension is. This scares and saddens me. Sometimes I wonder, 'does my own son understand what I'm saying to him? Will he know when I'm telling him how much I love him?' On a deeper level, I wonder sometimes whether this choice of language has harmed our relationship somehow. Does he resent me? Have I erected a wall between us that may have lasting consequences? How much has been robbed from our relationship by my [Gaelic] linguistic choice? (Aonghas, 1997)

Aonghas feels he has created a barrier, or "wall", between his son and himself due to his decision to speak Gaelic to his son. Thus, there is a constant perception, with this "wall" of 'Aonghas versus them - this side, that side'. It is an active, decision-making tool which separates reference groups for the purpose of identity confirmation. It is easier to confirm identity and status within the desired reference group if all of the relationships are a part of that same group. If none of the significant, personal relationships belong to that reference group, then there is more likely to be tension and anxiety regarding the linguistic choices made. Such is the case with subject Aonghas.

MacKinnon's (1997) review of the 1995 *Euromosaic* study confirmed that there has been a decline in Gaelic use between peers and spouses. Thus. 'English bonding', as Macleod[5] concludes is becoming more pervasive amongst friends and couples. The relationship is initially established in English and it continues in that medium. In mainland Scotland, for instance, only fourteen percent of spouses, with the potential to use Gaelic together, use Gaelic as a medium of communication (MacKinnon, 1997).

There is less Gaelic being spoken at meals in the home (only twelve percent)[6], and only seven percent of children use Gaelic with their siblings. The *Euromosaic* fails to document Gaelic use between children and their peers; however, the above figures illustrate an overwhelming establishment of English medium relationships between Gaelic speakers.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) argues that the reason so little Gaelic is being used between peers is because Gaelic is a 'subtractive' language; it is not perceived to be a popular medium of communication. For instance, following the introduction of television in the 1950's, children's perceptions of language began to change. English became 'pop', and Gaelic became 'thick', or *teuchter.* Gaelic has managed to shed its *teuchter* image recently with modern Gaelic medium television programming and elite educational Gaelic medium units (GMU's) in Scotland; however, only Macleod's theory regarding 'language bonding' (i.e. the language used upon establishing the relationship will be the language used in the relationship) best explains the persistence of an English, mono-cultural approach to linguistic interaction.

A similar 'interlinguistic relations' problem has occurred in other minority language communities. More than two decades ago, the province of Quebec, in Central Canada, was concerned about the lack of French used between spouses and families in the region. Birth rates amongst the francophone population had declined to such an extent that, for the first time in Canadian history, there was a serious concern for language shift within the province (Fishman, 1991). In an attempt to alleviate such a decline in 'inter relational' French, Premier Bourassa passed a bill which encouraged Quebeçois births by providing francophone families with an increase in 'children's allowance', a stipend provided to families on a quarterly basis to aid in child care expenses. Thus, the more francophone children a family produced, the more government assistance they would receive. This bill is still

warmly endorsed by the Péquiste government today; however, francophone births have neither increased or decreased in comparison to anglophone birth rates. Why? A person can no more decide with whom they will fall in love, English or French or Gaelic, than they can accurately predict the next government scandal. Feelings and attractions do not always follow the desired linguistic order.

If one knew for certain, for example, that s/he would fall in love with another Gaelic speaker, then Gaelic may stand a better chance at 'inter relational' reproduction. However, Fishman's (1991) stage 6, inter-generational transmission, is critical for reversing language shift. Currently, Gaelic L1 speakers are less common and Gaelic 'interlinguistic relations' are becoming increasingly non existent within English speaking areas. Gaelic bonds (op. cit. Macleod) must be initially established and continued throughout the period of a relationship if successful Gaelic language maintenance is to occur for the individual making such linguistic choices within a predominantly English environment.

CONCLUSION

The two typologies and constructs of the successful Gaelic language maintainers within this study demonstrate that increased exposure to one's self-identified reference group ('role' and 'level of speech competence') promotes prolonged Gaelic conversational episodes, and thus sustains maintenance. If educators can identify a learner's potential 'role' and 'level of speech ability' within the local Gaelic community, as well as 'interactional' difficulties to encounter, then it may be possible to increase the chances of sustained Gaelic conversational episodes between group members. Technology may also play a valuable role in increasing exposure to minority language reference group members. For example, contact with bloc members through television, electronic mail, radio, video links, and even the telephone can aid in developing Gaelic maintenance opportunities (Edwards, 1991), as well as

providing a modern role for the language to advance 'intergenerational transmission' (Fishman, 1991). Knowing the socioethnographic language and identity marker's of one's [reference] language community plots the map to language maintenance success.

When I began to look over what I had collected, I saw that it was a tapestry.

Their whole way of life was in a song. (Margaret Fay Shaw, 1993, 'Academic')

NOTES

[1]This term refers to 'original, native Gaelic speech' which has not been corrupted by contemporary changes to the language.

[2] The Gaelic schism which Àileas describes is also documented by Neil Gunn as early as June 10, 1942 in a letter to Douglas Young (1987). Gunn feels that the 'fatal' schism in the Gaelic community (of Scotland) is the result of a lack of a central cohering body, or government.

[3] There are many such examples of this term being used in letters to the editors of the both the West Highland Free Press and The Stornoway Gazette, but only one is cited here as an example.

[4] Premier storyteller.

[5] Macleod's theory has not been documented in published research literature, but has been orally chronicled amongst Gaelic Pre-school councils and parent groups within the Scottish Gaelic community.

[6] The dinner table is one of the traditional places where families come.

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Faculty of Education,
401 Sunset Avenue,
Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4
Canada.
ksmith@uwindsor.ca

Teaching Forum

WHAT DO YOU DO WHÉN THE TEACHER NEEDS A TEACHER?

DONALD MCNAMARA
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

Language enthusiasts are eager to spread the knowledge of a language whenever possible, but in some areas there is a lack of qualified teachers. In such cases, the choice is between lessons from an under qualified teacher or no lessons at all.

Thomas W. Ihde's article in the *Journal of Celtic Language* Learning (Ihde 1997: 41) raises the issue of the competence of Celtic language teachers in terms of both language fluency and pedagogy. It is a healthy sign indeed, if Celtic language instruction has been elevated from the status of living-room lessons to that of a demand for certification. In addition, as Professor Ihde cogently noted, "Better-qualified instructors will raise the image of both the teaching profession and the language in general." This argument is given further support by the knowledge that lack of teacher competence is believed to have been a contributing factor in the decline of the Irish language in Ireland (Hindley, 1990 : 206). With those factors in mind, I would like to report on my situation as an Irish language teacher because it may carry implications beyond my personal concerns.

Like Professor Ihde, I am a faculty member at a state college in New Jersey; I also teach Irish language classes at an adult education program nearby. Unlike Profesor Ihde, however, I consider myself to be one of those teachers whose Irish fluency falls short of the standards that certification would guarantee. (Also, unlike Professor Ihde, I

have not done the enormous amount of work he has done to promote Celtic languages.) The problem is double-edged.

I teach Irish at the Princeton Adult school, which operates at the public high school and is not affiliated with Princeton University. My students are working people who live too far south of New York and too far north of Philadelphia to avail of language classes in those cities. In addition, factors of location, time, family concerns, etc. make the classes offered by Brookdale Community College in conjunction with Daltaí na Gaeilge difficult for them to attend, even though Brookdale offers a comprehensive program that no individual could ever match. The Princeton location is ideal for my students, but I have been unable to find any teachers for whom the location is in any way convenient. To put it plainly:if I don't teach these students, no one else will.

When class began, it was so well subscribed that Princeton Adult School literally had to turn people away. Although I have experienced the dropout rate typical of an adult-education program, there is still a dedicated, enthusiastic core of people attending each week, even to the point of agreeing to meet informally when the school year concludes. We have established a good rapport, but I sometimes feel that my students are not being served as well as they might be. Students such as these, who are at the forefront of language acquisition in a given geographic area, are ideal candidates to become teachers themselves as interest spreads; but, once again, a chief concern is that their fluency level will not be equal to the task of providing their students with a solid grounding in the Irish language.

The other side of the problem is that, although I am more than willing (eager, in fact) to improve my fluency, a host of personal factors, not the least of which is my candidacy for the Ph.D. in English Literature at The Catholic University of America, precludes my attending classes either in the United States or Ireland. The alternatives seem to be two equally unattractive possibilities. One is to continue to give interested students lessons from an inferior teacher. The other is to refrain from offering any classes until a more

qualified teacher arrives -- a solution that leaves open the possibility that student interest will wither in the intervening time, which could be years. Our only choice until we have reached the ideal state, I believe, is to continue to stoke interest in Celtic languages by whatever means we have at our disposal. Even substandard instruction is preferable to allowing interested people to go wanting for Celtic language knowledge. Granted, this view may not be shared by all.

Some enthusiasts would prefer that a language not be spoken at all rather than be spoken badly. The problem with this view in terms of adult school learners is that they do not intend to become so accomplished in a language that they can move into a native-fluency setting. They would like to learn a little more about their heritage, they want to know the (approximate) pronunciation and meaning of the occasional word they see in an English text, or, in some cases, they just want to hear again some of the phrases they remember hearing their grandparents or parents speaking. In fact, my class has unanimously adopted the maxim ``Is fearr Gaeilge bhriste ná Béarla cliste" -- (Broken Irish is better than clever English.) With these factors in mind, I see no choice but to continue offering lessons to the students who are interested in them, even if the level of instruction falls short of the ideal. Surely this approach can hardly do any more damage to a language than something like internecine squabbling among the cognoscenti about which is the ``true" dialect.

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TAKING THE 'ACHING' OUT OF 'TEACHING': FUN AND GAMES IN THE CLASSROOM

MORAY J WATSON
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

When teaching languages it is important to remember the role of play in language acquisition. As adults, we often marvel at the ease with which children are able to learn things that cost us such effort and pain. Indeed, they learn without even being aware of what they are doing, if the 'real work' is couched in games or entertaining programs of one kind or another. The element of 'distraction' can be of great benefit. I resolved to bear this in mind when teaching Gaelic to adults on Sabhal Mòr Ostaig's summer short courses.

Having taught students of all ages (from pre-school to post-retirement), I have found that any and all (with the possible exception of 14-year-olds!) are willing to experiment with game-playing and role-playing in the classroom. Thus, I produced week-long courses which were based almost entirely on 'distraction' methods. Many of the games were drawn from language courses I had attended, read about or heard about, while a few were entirely my own work. The examples below are chosen at random from my collection, but they illustrate the diversity in the types of games that can be employed as well as the range of uses they can be put to.

The exercise I used as an 'ice-breaker' was one which involved all of the students getting out of their chairs and moving around the room. After a short preparatory session, I went around the class placing stickers on the backs of the students. The stickers had the names of animals (or, in another version of the game I used, famous people), and the purpose of the game was for the students to find out which animal 'they were' by asking questions of their colleagues. The format is no doubt fairly familiar, but the effect on the

atmosphere in the class, each time I used the game, was profound.

Useful for building vocabulary at the early stages, and then for revision somewhat later, is the 'bingo', 'house' or 'lotto' format. A number of versions are described in numerous communication courses, and the teacher's own imagination can soon give rise to others. One use I found for the format in Sabhal Mòr was 'opposites bingo'. Each student receives a bingo card with some adjectives written into the boxes (the cards are all slightly different, of course). The teacher then draws adjectives out of a 'hat' and calls them out. The students cover the *opposite* of the word the teacher has called: so, if the word that comes out of the hat is *mòr*, students cover *beag*. The winner is the first to have all their adjectives covered. While this game requires a good deal of preparation in the first instance, the time spent is a worthwhile investment, as the cards can be used in later classes and adapted for other purposes.

Board games can help to lighten the atmosphere in an intensive course, at the same time as encouraging students to use language naturally and innovatively. It is surprising how many familiar board games can be adapted for language-learning purposes, from the simple 'Snakes and Ladders' format (well-used in the Wlpan courses) to something as complex as *Monopoly*. When considering a game for adaptation, the important thing is to have a firm idea of the *purpose* it will serve in students' learning.

With an intermediate class, I used a version of the game *Guess Who?*, in which the two teams can each see about 20 cartoon pictures of people's faces. The same pictures are printed on small cards. Each team draws one card from the pile at the start of play. By asking each other questions about the facial features of the depicted characters, the teams try to guess the identity of the 'person' on the opposing side's card, e.g. 'A bheil falt bàn oirre?' ('Does she have blonde hair?') This was an effective way of allowing the students to review the work we had done on descriptions, and so it articulated well with the 'opposites bingo', which I had used earlier in the course to revise the

appropriate vocabulary. Although it is similar in concept to the oral-class favourite *20 Questions*, the presence of the board and the colourful cartoons seems to enhance the element of play and to help relax the students to a greater degree than I have observed when using that other game.

With Michelle Macleod, of NUI Galway's Irish Department, I am presently putting together a collection of games and other materials for the promotion of fluency in Scottish Gaelic. The package is provisionally (if prosaically) entitled *Pasgan de dh'Adhbharan do Luchd-Teagasg na Gàidhlig* and includes a variety of strategies which employ the 'distraction' techniques I am advocating here. We hope that the finished package will not only be of use to teachers of Gaelic, but that it will also be translatable into Welsh, Irish and other LCTLs.

REVIEWS

Johnstone, R.M., Harlen, W., Thorpe, G., MacNeil, M., and Stradling, R. *The Progress and Attainments of Pupils Receiving Gaelic Medium Primary Education,* Stirling: SCILT, University of Stirling, 1999. 71pp.

Research report prepared for the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department.

Ever since Gaelic immersion education was introduced into the Highland and Central Scottish regions in the 1980's, Scottish citizens have been concerned with the progress and attainments of the pupils in Gaelic medium classes. *The Progress and Attainments of Pupils Receiving Gaelic Medium Primary Education* (1999) is the first longitudinal research report of its kind to compare the achievements of Gaelic immersion students with the attainments of English immersion students in the same subject areas. The report marks the first collection of data demonstrating possible outcomes of Gaelic medium education in Scotland.

Four types of Gaelic immersion, or medium, education currently exist in elementary schools across Scotland. They are:

i. Gaelic medium primary schools.
ii. Gaelic medium units within a school offering English medium education.
iii. Gaelic medium classes within an English medium school.
iv. Bilingual Gaelic-English primary education.

All of the above types are represented within the study. The study focuses on two driving research questions which the report successfully addresses - 'Do the attainments of pupils in Gaelic medium primary education match national attainment targets in Gaelic at P(primary level)3 and P5, and in Gaelic and English at P7?' and 'How do the attainments

of pupils in Gaelic medium primary education in mathematics and environmental studies compare with national attainment levels and targets?' (p.1) These questions are examined through a quantitative analysis, which is later complemented (in Ch. 5 and 6) by a more qualitative, contextual exploration of factors influencing the Gaelic medium (GMU) pupils' progress and attainments.

Gaelic medium unit (GMU) students' attainments were collected in P3, P4, P5, and P7 (approximately, ages 8 to 12), over a period of three years (May, 1996, 1997, and 1998), from the national assessment and test information available. Two different test standards were collected and analysed each year. National test information, which provides data on individual pupil attainment according to national targets in the *5-14* curriculum guideline expectations; and the AAP (Assessment of Achievement Programme), which, through standardised testing of a different subject area each year, provides the mean scores of a group of pupils in comparison to the national means (exclusive to the *5-14* policy guidelines), enabled the study. For example, in 1996, the P3, P5, and P7 *Gaelic 5-14* ; the P5 and P7 *English 5-14*; the P5 *Maths 5-14* evaluations; and the P5 Science AAP were collected. In 1997, the P3, P5, and P7 *Gaelic 5-14;* the P5 and P7 *English 5-14* evaluations; and the P4 and P7 Maths AAP were collected. In 1998, the P3, P5, and P7 *Gaelic 5-14*; the P5 and P7 *English 5-14;* the P7 *Maths 5-14* evaluations; and the P7 English AAP were collected. The AAP does not require GMU students to reach the national standard of English until P7, *ergo,* only one grade was tested during this final round of AAP assessments.

In two cases, longitudinal data was collected on the same students over the three year period. For instance, the P3's assessed during the 1996 *Gaelic 5-14* were the same class of students evaluated during the 1997 P5 *Gaelic 5-14*, P5 *English 5-14*, and P4 Maths AAP. Also, the P5's evaluated during the 1996 *Gaelic, English and Maths 5-14* assessments were the same cohort evaluated during the 1998 P7 *Gaelic, English and Maths 5-14* and English AAP

assessments. Although this data will be a valuable resource to future researchers, it is not made full use of within the confines of this report. The report narrows its discussion to the research questions at hand by comparing the GMU achievements to those of their EMU (English medium unit) counterparts.

Chapter 3 of the report answers the question, 'Do the attainments of pupils in Gaelic medium primary education match the national attainment guidelines (as outlined in *5-14)*?' Johnstone et al's findings were, 'Yes. Sometimes.' As is common to many immersion studies, a great achievement of the GMU programme appears to be its positive effect on student language ability. The data collected on the *5-14* evaluations indicates that the P3's had achieved a level A or higher in all 4 of the language competencies tested. In P5 and P7, the GMU students outperformed EMU students in English. The qualitative data added some insight into this phenomenon since it indicated that pupils in schools with large GMU populations achieved higher *Gaelic 5-14* ratings, and students in schools with small GMU populations achieved higher *English 5-14* ratings. Thus, the majority language of the school appeared to have a direct influence on the language skills of the students. There was one exception to this, and that was among the P7 students. The P7 students were only evaluated at a level D *Gaelic 5-14* or lower. The reason provided for this decline in Gaelic language achievement at P7 was the fact that P7 was the last year prior to entry into [English] secondary school, and since there is currently little GMU provisions available at the secondary level, the researchers felt this was the reason why the students' language learning focus appeared to be on English as opposed to Gaelic. But the conclusion was left there, where further probing would have been beneficial. For example, is the reason for declining *Gaelic 5-14* scores at P7 due solely to the children's academic focus? Could it not be due to peer and adolescent growth stages? Or declining Gaelic resources and teachers at this level? Future investigation would aid this finding. Nevertheless, the

research question was answered. GMU students *do* reach the same attainments as their EMU counterparts, and often exceed them in language.

GMU attainments for English language competency proved to be higher for the 1998 AAP scores as well. Here, the difference was more marked for writing than for reading. (Ch. 4) Again, there is no exploration of why a Gaelic medium student would become a better English writer than an English medium student, and further insight into this result would have been valuable.

One recurring problem area for GMU students appeared to be in the science scores reported. In the report, 'science' falls under the umbrella category of 'environmental studies', which was the second research question probed. Due to the student numbers and the year of the science AAP (1996), only one component of 'environmental studies', 'general science', was able to be tested. Furthermore, both the science and the mathematics testing materials had to be translated into Gaelic. It is not made clear which body conducted the assessment translations, and the teachers reported that many of the curriculum materials available in these two subject areas were originally in English and had to have 'Gaelic paste-overs' attached to them because there was no Gaelic counterpart of the lessons available (or affordable). (Ch. 5) This taken into consideration, the science results showed GMU pupils attaining a lower level than their EMU counterparts, with a much wider gap at P7. (Ch. 4) In the related subject of Math, the P5's exhibited lower 'problem solving and inquiry' skills in the 1996 *Math 5-14* evaluations than their EMU counterparts; however, the P4 and P7 GMU's outscored the EMU's in the 1997 AAP standard Math testing. What does this differentiation mean?

The final two chapters of this report offer some surface perceptions of the results. For instance, the science test scores indicated that the GMU students were not attaining the same target levels as the EMU students, and the comments from head teachers and parents supported this finding. Head teachers were concerned about the shortage

of [Gaelic] science curriculum materials available, and [Gaelic] parents indicated that "Science terms do not easily translate" and "Science is neglected." (Ch. 5) The great majority of respondents; however, were pleased with the students' attainments in comparison with EMU populations. Most parents enrolled their children into GMU's for the language component, and as a result, were not disappointed since these scores were at par with English counterparts or better. One parental comment noted was, "we wanted our language to be the language of our children." (Ch. 5)

Johnstone et al's (1999) report provides a precious resource of data and beginning to Gaelic immersion educational research in the United Kingdom. While it is comforting to know that there is "no disadvantage in learning" (Ch. 6) in a GMU, it would still be worthwhile to pursue other advantages and disadvantages to Gaelic immersion education in Scotland. For example, one clear advantage appears to be in English writing attainment, yet why? Also, GMU students receiving 'free school meals entitlement' often perform better than the national mean of EMU students receiving the same entitlement, except in the cases of rural Highland schools. (Ch. 5) Why? What correlation, if any, is there between economic prosperity and GMU achievement? Johnstone mentions that the GMU children's perceptions of history, geography, and culture may be distinct from their English cohorts (Ch. 6), yet how? *The Progress and Attainments of Pupils Receiving Gaelic Medium Primary Education (1999)* is a rich source of data which has yielded a plethora of further inquiries. If it may be continued, we may learn more about lesser-used language immersion education.

Reviewed by Kara A. Smith
University of Windsor

Jones, Mari C., *Language Obsolescence and Revitalization: Linguistic Change in Two Sociolinguistically Contrasting Welsh Communities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. Pp. viii, 452.

This 1998 study is a welcome contribution to the sociolinguistics of Welsh as well as to the larger study of language obsolescence, a current topic in light of fears about the next century spelling the death of many ethnic tongues. Jones investigates whether changes in Welsh are interpretable as indications of language death and whether the ongoing standardization of Welsh is leading to dialect loss. The latter issue involves exploring the role Welsh-language immersion schooling may be playing in the maintenance and evolution of the language. The six-chapter volume contains a seventeen page bibliography, five appendices, and numerous graphs and charts.

Chapter One introduces the study and describes different types of immersion education, crucial background information because most young people in Jones' study were enrolled in Welsh-medium schools. The study of Welsh has been compulsory in Wales since 1996, and the number of immersion schools has steadily grown. Therefore schools play an important role in language maintenance or, in heavily Anglicized regions, in revitalization. French-immersion education in Canada serves as a reference point since it has been the focus of a number of serious studies. Jones pays particular attention to whether children in immersion schooling speak a school dialect, an academic register of L2 marked by certain deviations vis-à-vis the traditional norms of the community.

Jones' study was carried out in two Welsh communities: Rhymney, a village in south Wales which is 6.7% Welsh-speaking, and Rhosllanerchrugog, in the north, where 38.1% speak it. Two kinds of variables were investigated: (1) features common to all varieties of Welsh, and (2), features specific to the local dialect. Loss of features in group 1 would suggest language obsolescence, while loss of group 2 features would indicate dialect death (and

possibly standardization). Linguistic data were gathered by tape-recording free conversation among small groups of speakers of all ages, although school children are the locus of the most interesting findings. Jones also performed a matched guise study to elicit attitudes to Standard Welsh and dialect.

The speech of school children from both communities was found to contain numerous changes in group one variables, including the loss of gender marking in nouns and adjectives, loss of preposition inflection, simplification of responsive forms of yes, and over-generalization of the verb 'cael' "to get." Jones carefully points out that it is the socio-political situation of the Welsh language, rather than these changes as such, which identify them as tokens of obsolescence. Some of the phenomena noted, including the use of English tags in Welsh speech, would be considered typical code-switching behavior in healthy bilingual communities, but are pathological signs in an embattled minority language (pp. 86ff.).

Jones demonstrates that the speech of school children also lacks many dialect features (group two variables) abundant in the speech of older speakers. Dialect features (such as provection, and the 3sg preterite ending -ws in Rhymney) are being replaced by standard forms or in some cases by dialect mixture. Welsh-medium education is convincingly shown to be responsible for much of this dialect loss, in part because it fosters negative attitudes toward dialects. Indeed, an overwhelming majority of informants viewed the dialects as incorrect and inferior varieties. Surprisingly, school children were generally unable to even correctly identify the local dialect when they heard it.

Welsh-medium schools appear, curiously, to be responsible for certain other negative developments as well, in that they have given rise to school dialects. In a comparison of historically inappropriate forms among L1 (Welsh mother-tongue) immersion students, L2 (English mother-tongue) immersion students, and adult learners of Welsh, Jones finds that both L1 and L2 pupils speak a kind of school dialect not shared by adult learners. Jones

suggests that the linguistic deviations of L2 children may be negatively influencing the less numerous L1 children in some schools, but leaves this point to future research.

In Chapter Four, Jones provides brief discussions of language death and of standardization, first in general terms and then in the Welsh context. The emergence of Standard Welsh is contrasted with that of the English and French standards, which came about via the rise to prominence of a particular regional dialect; Welsh appears to be standardizing by dialect convergence or the removal of regional features until what is left is a common core of features shared by all dialects.

The sociolinguistic situation of Welsh is compared with that of its two P-Celtic sister languages, Breton and Cornish, in Chapter Five. Jones summarizes research on linguistic changes underway in Breton which are indicative of obsolescence, and discusses why the outlook for Breton appears so much worse than for Welsh. In Wales, a linguistic standard had emerged from below, with the medieval bardic schools and the 1588 publication of the Welsh Bible partially staving off dialect fragmentation and promoting a non-regional literary variety. Standard Breton, on the other hand, has had to be artificially developed from above, by committees and language planners, and Breton speakers are still embroiled in counterproductive disputes over the selection of a single orthography for its highly divergent dialects. Attitudes also play a large role in the differing fates of Welsh and Breton. While Welsh speakers have a strong Welsh identity that transcends the local region, Breton speakers have traditionally been less likely to think of themselves as Breton than to have purely local loyalties. This is partly because Brittany does not exist as a political unit in modern-day France. Finally, the Welsh movement is being led primarily by native speakers whereas the Breton movement is spearheaded by intellectuals whose L1 is French. The Breton movement thus lacks grassroots support.

Some of Jones' findings will be frightening to those interested in the survival of Welsh, for she shows

convincingly that modern spoken Welsh is starting to succumb to the encroachment of English and to show signs of obsolescence even in its strongholds (e.g. Rhosllanerchrugog). Yet there are also reasons for optimism such as the fact that an increasing number of people learn Welsh as L2 every year and that the decline in number of Welsh speakers has more or less been halted. In any case, Jones book is a highly valuable piece of scholarship on the Welsh language and on the role of schools and of standardization in language maintenance.

Reviewed by Kevin J. Rottet
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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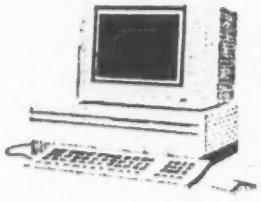

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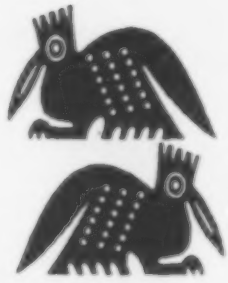

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Announcements

MARCH 2000 :
American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL), March 11-14, 1999, Vancouver, Canada. See www.aaal.org/pages/Vancouver.html for more information.

Twenty-second **University of California Celtic Studies Conference (UCLA),** March 16–19, Los Angeles, California. Featured speakers at the conference will include Máire Herbert (NUI Cork) and Katharine Simms (Trinity College). It will feature a variety of papers; a concert at 2 on Saturday, March 18; the traditional banquet on Saturday evening; and a "conference within a conference" in celebration of St. Patrick's Day (Friday, March 17), under the sponsorship of the UCLA Center for Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Studies, entitled "The Gaelic Literary Imagination in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," featuring talks by William Gillies (University of Edinburgh), Mícheál Mac Craith (NUI Galway), Catherine McKenna (CUNY Graduate

Center), and Máirtín Ó Briain (NUI Galway). Admission to the conference presentations and concert on March 16 and 18-19 (all in Royce 314 on the UCLA campus) is free, although there will probably be a registration fee for the Clark event, which will include lunch and refreshments. For further details on the conference and the Call for Papers, please contact Professor Joseph Nagy, at UCLA.

APRIL 2000:

The **Cork Youth International Film Video Arts Festival**, 5–11 April, Cork, Ireland. Closing Date for entries: 11th March 2000. Categories: Fiction, Documentery, Animation, Experemental, Music Videos, Computer Animation. All categories can also be made in the Irish language. Format: Film—8mm, Super 8, 16mm; Video—VHS, SVHS, 8mm; VideoC. Duration: 20 minutes max. Open To: Under 12yrs, Under 18yrs, Students Under 25yrs. Special Category: Blarney Trophy Award,open to adults Videos and Copies of films are acceptable. Awards and certificates of participation will be given. For further details, please contact Helen Prout: tel. 323 21 306019, e-mail hproutl@tinet.ie

International Linguistic Association (ILA), April 7–9, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. For more information write Ruth M. Brend at rbrend@umich.edu.

JUNE 2000

North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers, June 22–25, Limerick, Ireland. NAACLT'2000 is aimed at teachers of Celtic languages, learners of such languages, and researchers in related fields such as Celtic Studies, Linguistics, Computational Linguistics, Psychology and Sociology. It will comprise a workshop day, two conference days and an excursion day. See http://www.csis.ul.ie/naaclt2000/ for more information.

ACIS National Meeting. June 26–July 1, Limerick, Ireland. See http://www.acisweb.com/cfp.html for more information.

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